

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Final Office Action dated February 17, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1-18 are currently pending.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the interview of November 5, 2003. The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 1-18 over the prior art from the Office Action of April 29, 2003 discussed in the interview, but did not consider Applicant's arguments raised during the interview.

Specifically, in the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art (Fig. 2, hereinafter "Applicant's Related Art") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,146,354 to Plesinger (hereinafter "Plesinger") and U.S. Patent No. 5,929,950 to Matsuda. Claims 6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art in view of Plesinger and Matsuda as applied to claims 1-5 and 7 and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,195,141 B1 to Kawano et al. (hereinafter "Kawano"). Claims 12-16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art (Fig. 2, hereinafter "Applicant's Related Art") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,703,665 to Muramatsu et al. and Matsuda. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art (Fig. 2, hereinafter "Applicant's Related Art") in view of Muramatsu et al. in view of Kawano.

Applicant amends claims 1, 7 and 12 to expressly recite those features that were believed inherent in the original claim.

The rejection of claims 1-6 is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Independent claim 1 is allowable over the cited references in that this claim recites a combination of elements including, for example, “a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly and offset and discontiguous from the light source and maintaining a distance between the panel guide and the backlight assembly.” None of the cited references including Applicant’s Related Art, Plesinger, and Kawano, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 1 of the present application is different from the Plesinger structure in that Plesinger does not teach or suggest a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly. In Plesinger, the heat insulation layer 146, alleged by the Examiner to disclose the pad of the claim, is “between the back frame member 120 of the metal frame 118, and the heat fin member 144 of the heat conductive shield 142” (Plesinger, column 5, lines 5-8).

Furthermore, Fig. 3 of Plesinger clearly shows that the layer 146 is directly above the lamp 100. Therefore, layer 146 is not “offset and discontiguous from the light source and maintaining a distance between the panel guide and the backlight assembly” as required by claim 1. In addition, the structure of claim 1 of the present application is different from Kawano in that Kawano does not teach or suggest a pad provided in relation to the panel guide or the backlight assembly at all. The Examiner does not allege that Matsuda discloses or suggests this feature, and Applicant notes that it does not. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and claims 2-6, which depend from claim 1, are allowable over the cited references.

The rejection of claims 7-11 are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Claims 7-11 is allowable over the cited references in that independent claim 7 recites a combination of elements including, for example, “a first pad provided between the panel guide and the light guide separating the liquid crystal panel and the optical sheets from

the lamp". None of the cited references including Applicant's Related Art, Plesinger, and Kawano, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 7 of the present application is different from the Plesinger and Kawano structures in that they do not teach or suggest a first pad provided between the panel guide and the light guide. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 7 is allowable over the cited references. Applicant submit that claims 8-11 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence on allowable claim 7.

The rejection of claim 12-18 is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Independent claim 12 is allowable over the cited references in that this claim recites a combination of elements including, for example, "a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly removed and discontinguous from the light source, said pad maintaining a distance between the panel guide and the backlight assembly." None of the cited references including Applicant's Related Art, Muramatsu, Matsuda, and Kawano, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 12 of the present application is different from the Muramatsu structure in that Muramatsu does not teach or suggest a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly. In Muramatsu, a "spacer 40A has three cylindrical protrusions 45...each of which adheres to the bottom wall 41 at positions which face the corresponding elastic member 60" (Muramatsu, column 6, lines 14-19). Furthermore, Muramatsu notes that "the protrusion...is harder than the elastic member 60" (Muramatsu, column 5, lines 33-35). Thus protrusion 45 does not read on the "pad" of claim 12.

In addition, the structure of claim 12 of the present application is different from Kawano in that Kawano does not teach or suggest a pad provided in relation to the panel guide or the backlight assembly at all. The Examiner does not allege that Matsuda discloses or suggests this feature, and Applicant notes that it does not. Accordingly, Applicant

respectfully submits that claim 12 is allowable over the cited references. Claims 13-18 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence on claim 12.

Applicant believes the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: June 16, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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